

Children & Young People's - Welcome Guide



This Guide has been written for you and for other children and young people who need to be cared for when they are unable to live at home with their own family at this time.

You will have a Social Worker who has been chosen from the Local Authority (Council) to help and support you. They have helped to find you a Foster Carer to live with.

Your Foster Carer or your Social Worker can help to explain anything in this guide that you may not understand.

Any questions you may have...

You can ask your Foster Carer any questions and if they don't know the answers they will ask your Social Worker for you.

What does fostering mean?



Foster Carers look after children as part of their own family. Each foster family is different. Some foster families have one or two parents; some have their own children or may look after other children as well as you.



The Foster Carer will make you feel welcome and help you settle into their home.

Why am I being fostered and how long will it be for?



If you do not understand why you are staying with your Foster Carers or how long you will be in foster care, your own Social Worker will be able to tell you this. Your Foster Carer can make arrangements for you to see or speak with your Social Worker.

Who are my Foster Carers?

My Foster Carers	
Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	

How can my Foster Carer help me?



Your Foster Carer will try to help you as much as possible. They understand that leaving your own family can be very upsetting for you, and for your family. They know staying with a foster family and meeting new people may be strange and difficult for you.

Everyone understands that you will need time to settle and get used to many new things and new people.



Your Foster Carer and members of the Foster Carers family are experienced in caring for children and young people who are unable to live with their families. They understand that you may have many worries or anxieties about yourself and your family. Your Foster Carer will try to answer any questions you may have and will allow time for you to become more familiar with your foster family and the home. Your Foster Carers will always do their best to help and support you.

What will my Foster Carers expect from me?



Your Foster Carers want you to be happy, they want to hear your views, and they want to get to know you. They will want to know about your routines, the food you like, your hobbies, any activities you would like to do and things that are important to you. They will also want to know about the things you don't like, including food and the things that make you feel unhappy. Your foster carers will help you speak to your Social Worker about anything you might not be happy with and things you would like to change.

Your Foster Carers may not always be able to give you everything you ask for, but they will always listen to you and will explain any decisions that are made.

Will there be rules in the foster home?

SAFER CARING POLICY



Every foster family has a Safer Caring Policy. This is a list of house rules that make sure the foster home is a safe place for everyone who lives there.

Your Foster Carer will talk to you about their Safer Caring Policy. There may be something you want to add that hasn't been thought of. Your foster carer will help you if there is anything you are unsure about or don't understand.

The Safer Caring Policy covers things like:

BEDROOMS



You will have your own bedroom, unless you have a brother or sister and everyone has agreed you are able/or want to share a room.




Your Foster Carer will always knock on your bedroom door before coming in.





You should not enter anyone else's bedroom.

Everybody in the house should respect each other's privacy.

Your bedroom should be somewhere you feel safe and relaxed with your personal belongings that are important to you.

People should not touch other people's things without asking.

<p>BATHROOM</p> 	<p>If you can wash and bath yourself, you will be able to do this in private.</p> <p>Younger children will be helped if needed.</p> <p>Only one person is allowed in the bathroom at any time.</p> <p>The bathroom will have a lock on the door that can be unlocked only in an emergency.</p>
<p>CLOTHES</p> 	<p>Everyone in the house will wear appropriate clothing and be fully covered at all times.</p>
<p>TELEPHONE & INTERNET</p> 	<p>You will be able to use the telephone and access the internet.</p> <p>Your Social Worker will talk to your Foster Carers about this.</p> <p>Your Foster Carers will have parental controls on the technology in the home. This is to keep you safe.</p> <p>You may already have your own mobile phone. Your Social Worker and your Foster Carer will speak with you about house rules for mobile phones.</p>
<p>MONEY</p>	<p>Your Foster Carer will provide you with any money that has been agreed. This could include things</p>

	<p>like bus fares, dinner money and pocket money.</p>
<p>FOOD</p> 	<p>Talk to your Foster Carer to let them know which food you like and do not like. You could go shopping and choose food with your Foster Carer. You may even like to cook with your Foster Carer.</p> <p>Your Foster Carer will encourage you to have a healthy balanced diet and may suggest different foods you could try.</p>
<p>AFFECTION</p> 	<p>From time to time, you may need a hug, or you might prefer a high five.</p> <p>It is OK for you to say no to anyone who asks you if you would like a hug.</p>
<p>FRIENDS</p> 	<p>If you wish to see any friends or have friends visit you, speak to your Foster Carers and they will try to arrange this for you.</p> <p>If you are older and able to spend time with friends independently, your Foster Carer will want to know where you are going so that they can make sure you are safe.</p> <p>Let your Foster Carer know what time you will return.</p>

Who does my Foster Carer work for?

Your Foster Carer works for the Wigan Council, and they have a Social Worker called a Supervising Social Worker who gives support, advice and help to Foster Carers. The Supervising Social Worker will visit regularly and make sure that things are going well for Foster Carers and the children and young people living with them. There may also be a support worker from the fostering service who visits, and they will also give support advice and help.

As well as having your own Social Worker, you can also talk to your Foster Carers Supervising Social Worker or support worker about anything.

The Supervising Social Worker and your own Social Worker will keep in touch to make sure your fostering family has the right training and support and that they are looking after you well.

The name of my own Social Worker is	
They will visit me every	
Telephone number	

The name of my Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker is	
Telephone number	

The name of my Independent Reviewing Officer is	
Telephone number	

Information about me

Do my Foster Carers keep records about me?



The Fostering Service needs to keep information about all children and young people who live with Foster Carers. This is to make sure you have a record of what has happened for the future and to make sure you are supported and cared for in the way that you need.

This information is stored securely due to its confidential nature. If you want to see any of your information, ask your Foster Carer, Social Worker, or Supervising Social Worker how to do this.

My Meetings

What is the Home Planning Meeting?



When you are in foster care, a meeting called the Home Planning Meeting or Home Agreement Meeting is held. These meetings are usually attended by your own Social Worker, your family, your Foster Carer, and their Supervising Social Worker. You can also attend this meeting.

The Home Planning Meeting is a very important meeting. Decisions and agreements are made and recorded on a form. If you attend this meeting, you may find parts of the meeting and the form that is being completed boring, but it is important that as much information as possible is collected so that the best care can be given to you.

At this meeting, the following will be discussed and agreed:

- Your daily routines, like getting up times, bedtimes, what you like to eat and what you like to do.
- Time you spend with your family called Family Time, and time you spend with your friends.
- School.

- Medical appointments, like Doctors, Dentist, Opticians and so on.
- Any fun things, activities or hobbies you do or would like to do.

What is my Care Plan?



A Care Plan is a document that says how your needs will be met while you are in care, who will be responsible for this and what the long-term plans are for your care. You will be given a copy of your Care Plan, and someone will sit down with you to explain it and make sure you understand everything it says. Your Care Plan will be discussed at the Home Planning Meeting so that everyone is clear about what is happening and what needs to happen.

What is a 'Looked After Review'?

IMPORTANT

There is another important meeting about your care. This is called a 'Child Looked After' CLA Review.

All children who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority must have regular reviews.

The Review Meeting is arranged and chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who will want to meet with you and make sure that your wishes and feelings are understood. This meeting will look closely at all your needs, your wishes and feelings, and confirm your Care Plan.

This is your meeting, and you can attend this meeting if you choose. Your own Social Worker can explain to you more about this important meeting, and who and why people are involved in it.

Your rights

What is a right?



A right is something you have as a person. Every child and young person under 18 have rights, no matter who they are and where they live or what they believe in.

What are my rights if I am in care?

If you are 'looked after', there are several things that the law says that Wigan Council and other services must do. These are:

- Ensure that you are safe and well cared for.
- Make sure that you have an up-to-date Care Plan that you can understand and that includes your views, wishes and feelings.
- Ensure you have an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). An IRO is responsible for making sure that the Local Authority is doing their best to take care of you. An IRO will make sure your CLA Reviews run smoothly and will work with you to ensure that these meetings are productive and include your views, wishes and feelings.
- Complete a Home Plan which will say who must do what to make sure you are taken care of and have everything you need in your foster home.
- Education plans and Health plans will also be completed and regularly reviewed. They will give you information on how to see records and documents that include information about you.
- When making decisions about you, people must ensure the things that are important to you are respected such as your religion, ethnic and racial background, culture and language.
- Help you keep in contact with important people in your life, such as parents, brothers, sisters, extended family members and friends.
- Your Social Worker must visit you regularly at your Foster Carers and offer to speak with you alone.
- Provide you with an independent Advocate if you would like one.
- Provide you with information on how to make a complaint.